



## The Concert Hall at Kings Place

As someone fond of chamber music, I found the opportunity to design a new venue to be something very special. It gave me great pleasure that the London Chamber Music Society decided to hold its concerts there, and it may be of interest to LCMS members to hear something of how the design came about.

I have to start with the very unusual client behind everything at Kings Place: Peter Millican. Instead of simply being interested in the 'commercial', he had the vision to fund an office building that supports a broadly based, public arts venue specialising in music.

Rob Harris, our acoustician, gave us a number of design principles. First, that Hall One should be a 'shoebox', which is considered the best shape for a chamber music venue. Secondly, the internal volume should be related to the size of the audience, creating a room that is roughly a double cube. The acoustic requirement is met by having tall columns regularly spaced in the upper part of the hall to distribute long sound waves and columns in random patterns lower down to distribute short waves. The consequential design 'tension' of the transition from the regular to the random also results in a more visually interesting appearance than it might otherwise have been.

The columns stand away from the walls to allow an acoustic curtain to be drawn in the gap all round the hall. With the curtains in place the reverberation time (the sound quality) is shortened; without the curtains the reverberation time lengthens. This acoustic flexibility is important for a hall that has a wide variety of programming: for example, the reverberation time that suits chamber music is the opposite of

that which suits the spoken voice. The same gap allows lighting to wash up the walls creating the illusion of infinite space. A concert hall should provide, in addition to excellent acoustics, a memorable visual experience.

The interior of the hall is lined with oak. It comes from a single Bavarian 500-year-old tree, named Contessa, which provided more than an acre of veneer. We saw the veneers being cut in Tokyo, when Peter Millican took us to Japan to look at the many new small halls there. There was also a truly memorable visit to the Hanover factory where the pianos for Hall One were chosen to see the making of a Steinway. Witnessing the perfection of the craftsmanship and hearing the pianos come to life as the first notes are sounded is almost akin to witnessing a kind of birth—altogether very moving.

There is a second, 'rehearsal' hall at Kings Place. Having the two halls gives flexibility: one provides raked seating; the other, a flat floor with the possibility of performance in the round.

It was with great pride that I heard the first LCMS event at Kings Place, and I have continued to enjoy your excellent programming. I think that the sound quality of Hall One is something quite special and unique in London, and I hope that the Society continues to support Kings Place. We all have a great deal to thank Peter Millican for.

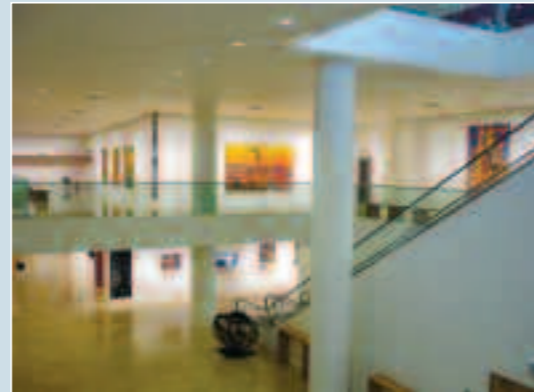


**Jeremy Dixon**

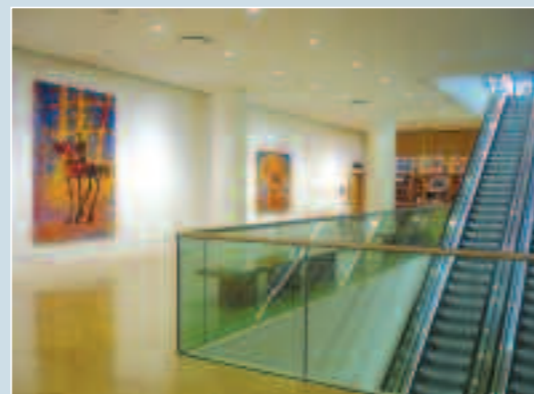
*Sir Jeremy is a partner in Dixon Jones Architects, which designed the multi-award-winning Kings Place.*

## Visual Arts: Kings Place Gallery

In October 2008, Nico Widerberg's inaugural exhibition at Kings Place Gallery was honoured with a visit by the Crown Prince of Norway and on the same day his commissioned sculpture was unveiled by the King of Norway at our sister gallery in Newcastle.



Other equally memorable exhibitions have included Albert Irvin's vibrant canvases; Francis Giacobetti's striking but stark photographs of Francis Bacon; and Ian McKeever's monumental *Temple Paintings*. More recent exhibitions include Ørnulf Opdahl's *Mood Paintings of the North* and Sophie Benson's *Vanishing Points*, both a sober contrast to Frans Widerberg's *After Eden* exhibition of paintings in blazing primary colours.



Jane Bown's exhibition *Exposures*, organized in collaboration with the Guardian/Observer, focused on 100 black-and-white photographs of her six-decade career. It attracted an unprecedented number of visitors, as well as considerable press and media coverage. By the end of the exhibition the

*Frans Widerberg: After Eden, Painting and Prints 1989-2008*

exhibition catalogue was sold out, along with many of the photographs.

Kings Place Gallery is also the London base for The Ruth Borchard Collection, the extraordinary archive of British self-portraits collected by Ruth Borchard, who died in 2000. By the time she ceased collecting self-portraits, she had amassed 100 works, spanning 50 years (1921 to 1971), each within her upper price limit of 21 guineas. The gallery will show the collection every other year and, beginning in 2011, will organize an associated national self-portrait competition, which will be held with the intention that the collection continue to grow in the spirit of the original.

Forthcoming highlights include exhibitions by Magnum photographer Chris Steele-Perkins; by Stephen Chambers, one of the youngest elected RAs and Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Co-Ordinator 2010; *Unfold*, which presents work responding to climate change; and an Albert Irvin RA Print Retrospective.

Please visit our website for further information:  
[www.kingsplace.co.uk/visualarts/kingsplacegallery](http://www.kingsplace.co.uk/visualarts/kingsplacegallery)

Kings Place Gallery is affiliated to Northumbria University Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. Mara-Helen Wood is Director of both galleries as well as the curator of exhibitions that travel from Newcastle to London, bridging the North/South divide. Nicola Euden is Gallery Manager of Kings Place Gallery and Helen Rawling is Deputy Manager. We welcome visits by members of the London Chamber Music Society. On Sundays, the gallery closes at 5pm, but the exhibitions can be viewed in the public spaces on the Gallery Level, Concert Level and North Balcony even when the gallery is closed.

**Nicola Euden**

*Kings Place Gallery operates a programme of temporary and touring exhibitions by artists of national and international reputation, as well as representing younger, emerging artists.*

## Support and Sponsorship

The LCMS sponsorship scheme at Kings Place is now well under way, and a wide range of possibilities is available, including sponsoring one work or a complete concert.

There is also the opportunity to commission a new work, with the premiere to be given at one of our Sunday concerts. Early in the 2010 spring season the Allegri Quartet gave the first performance of Thomas Hyde's string quartet, commissioned by the John S Cohen Foundation. Other generous supporters have included Susan and Walter Rudeloff, currently trustees of the LCMS, at a concert given by the Orchestra of St. John's Chamber Ensemble; and Meriel Serjeant, a long-standing and enthusiastic supporter and former trustee of the LCMS, at the Turner Ensemble concert on 17 January 2010.

At the time of writing, a special commission, again by Susan and Walter Rudeloff, of a new string quartet by James Francis Brown was due to be premiered on 16 May 2010 by the Badke Quartet.

It is an unfortunate fact that few cultural organisations in London earn enough money from ticket sales alone to support their activities, and the LCMS is no exception. A Society such as ours, a registered charity that receives no support from government arts bodies, cannot fully realise its objectives without additional financial help. Among other things, we are keen to further our commitment to support and encourage young musicians, and sponsoring is an ideal way both for the sponsor and the LCMS to fulfil these objectives.

We are currently in urgent need of a fund-raising volunteer with some experience, who would have time both to help us with our sponsorship programme and to approach trusts and funding bodies for outside funding. If you are interested in helping us, please contact me direct on [leon@londonchambermusic.org.uk](mailto:leon@londonchambermusic.org.uk), or speak to any of our other trustees.

**Leon Levy**, Hon. Treasurer

# Chamber Music Notes

## THE LCMS Newsletter

ISSUE 2 AUTUMN 2010

### Welcome!

This has been a most successful season so far both artistically and administratively. I would like to thank our partners at Kings Place—the box-office staff, duty managers, stage managers, technical staff, admin staff and ushers, whose contributions make the concerts run so smoothly. Not only do they carry out their roles efficiently, but they also carry them out cheerfully, making Kings Place a great place to promote concerts!



*photo: Sarah Hamant*

This issue of our Newsletter, continuing the series 'Getting to Know You', presents pen-portraits and photos of some of these valued partners. LCMS also shares Kings Place with other artistic organisations, and we highlight one of them in this issue: Kings Place Gallery, which enhances the concert foyer as well as the North Balcony with changing exhibitions.

In 'Behind the Notes', also a regular Newsletter feature, our artistic director, Peter Fribbins, tantalises us with upcoming musical delights. One of those delights is the Turner Ensemble, LCMS resident artists in 2010-2011, and Frances Angell reports on what we can expect from the Ensemble during their residency.

None of these delights would be possible without Kings Place, the building. So we are very pleased to hear from its architect, Sir Jeremy Dixon, about how the award-winning building and concert hall came into being.

We hope your interest will be piqued by our review of a fascinating talk about Gerald Hoffnung by Annetta Hoffnung, which was presented by LCMS in January. If so, you will find a useful website in the article.

You may have noticed that the LCMS Newsletter is now called *Chamber Music Notes*. LCMS member Ed Allen won the competition to name the Newsletter, and has claimed his two free tickets to the LCMS concert of his choice. Thank you, Ed.

Finally, I would like to remind you that we would love to hear from you with any comments or suggestions about the concerts, the Newsletter, or any other aspect of the LCMS. Peter Fribbins and I would be pleased to talk to you or you can reach us by emailing our administrator, Karolina [karolina@londonchambermusic.org.uk](mailto:karolina@londonchambermusic.org.uk)

**Neil Johnson**  
Executive Chairman

London  
Chamber Music  
Society



*Photo: London Concertante © Horst Kolo, 2010*

# Behind the Notes

We have an exciting, high-quality and varied series of chamber music concerts lined up for 2010–11, beginning on 3 October with the famous Wihan Quartet from the Czech Republic. The excellent Carducci, Allegri and Chilingirian quartets are among those following the Wihan in the autumn. The Allegri Quartet will return on 30 January to begin a two-year cycle of the complete Beethoven string quartets, with the winter/spring season seeing the first three concerts in the series. Each concert will also feature a Shostakovich quartet, so this should be a fascinating project. I will be writing more about this important series in the next issue of *Chamber Music Notes*.



Another thread for 2010–11 is concerts by the Turner Ensemble, which comprises principals from the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and other orchestras and some of the finest players in London. They will follow up their impressive debut in January 2010 as LCMS resident artists for the 2010–11 season with four more

concerts. The first, in November, demonstrates their versatility in a trio by Rihm, romantic lieder with Anthony Gardiner—one of the ‘Young Artists’ from the Royal Opera House—and Brahms’ Hungarian-inspired Piano Quintet in G minor. Their programmes in January, March and May 2011 will include works by Schubert, Schumann, Messiaen, and the wonderful Beethoven Septet.

Other highlights in the autumn half of our season include the violin and piano duo Tamsin Waley-Cohen and Simon Crawford-Phillips (the former playing on her 1721 ex-Fenyves Stradivarius), the world premiere of a new quartet by Anthony Payne, the superb Rosamunde, Sitkovetsky and Aquinas piano trios (the last is a new ‘discovery’), and the Primrose Piano Quartet. The Fibonacci Sequence brings us a programme that includes Mozart’s famous quintet for piano and winds, Samuel Barber’s ‘Summer Music’, and Poulenc’s ever-popular Sextuor for piano and winds. Vicci Wardman, Principal Violist of the Philharmonia Orchestra, joins the Allegri Quartet on 19 December for our final concert before Christmas, ending our autumn season high in the Austrian Alps, with the G major String Quintet composed there by Brahms.

And if that were not enough, 5 December promises to be a remarkable concert, and possibly one of the most unusual I have programmed in my eight years as Artistic Director for the Society. The ‘Quartet of Peace’ event that evening will feature four South African musicians— Suzanne Martens, Peter Martens, David Juritz (Leader, London Mozart Players) and Gareth Lubbe (Principal Violist, Gewandhausorchester, Leipzig). They will play on a quartet of string instruments made especially by luthier Brian Lisus in honour of South Africa’s four Nobel Peace laureates— the late Dr. Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk and Bishop Desmond Tutu. A performance in Mandela’s living room in early December, attended by De Klerk and Tutu, will be followed by a gala concert at this year’s Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo and

Turner Ensemble playing Janáček

## Turner Ensemble in Residence

Roger Montgomery, the horn player of the Turner Ensemble, notes that “as a horn player you get used to playing great tunes at the best moments of sumptuous orchestral scores. The horn chamber music repertoire is somewhat sparser. While early wind or mixed wind and string ensembles by Haydn and Mozart nod in the right direction, the Beethoven Septet is the first piece that really opens the door to the serious major chamber works, and in its wake came the works by Schubert and Spohr. It’s fantastic to be able to play these works by players whose playing I know very well and admire. It may seem odd, considering the size of the Royal Opera House Orchestra and others, but much more time in a long evening’s Wagner or Strauss is spent in quiet chamber interactions than in blasting *tutti*, so in a sense it’s not such a different musical experience.”

It seems only fitting to give the first word in this article to Roger—not only because it underscores the flexible and unusual composition of the group, but also because his encyclopedic knowledge of unusual chamber repertoire was the source of the Janáček Concertino we performed in January. Ten players for our LCMS debut in January was an unusually large number, but with Peter Fribbins having presided over our repertoire suggestions as a benign version of Simon Cowell, our programme was not so much an X Factor talent parade as a cohesive exploration of the influence of traditional Eastern music on the art music of the West at a time of rapid globalisation. The jewel-like world of whole-tone scales and other modes was shown in different lights by the acerbically provocative Janáček and the elegant ice and fire of Ravel and Debussy, whose arpeggiated harp textures were echoed by the arabesques and passage-work of the Fauré Piano Quartet.

Fittingly for a group that contains so many Principals of the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, our 14 November concert will introduce the voice of Robert Anthony Gardiner from the Young Artists Program, with songs by Schumann. Schumann’s music is the foremost influence on Wolfgang Rihm’s *Fremde Szenen* No. 3, which forms the centrepiece of a programme that not only explores a living tradition of German chamber music, but also inhabits a heightened world of “music as emotion in form” (Rihm).

The transcendental Schubert Piano Trio in B flat and the tragic Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time form the programme for 23 January 2011, and the 20 March 2011 programme consists of two favourites, the Brahms Clarinet Quintet and Schubert’s String Quintet in C.

Following Schumann’s dictum: “The painter turns a poem into a painting; the musician sets a picture to music”, the Ensemble is delighted that Peter Fribbins has accepted a commission to compose a companion piece for the Beethoven Septet in our 15 May 2011 concert, taking one of Turner’s paintings in the National Gallery as his inspiration.

Outside the LCMS residency, the Turner Ensemble is thrilled to have a Festival weekend at the picturesque Loddon Mill in Norfolk in May 2011.

Frances Angell

*The Turner Ensemble, drawn from distinguished principal players of the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Philharmonia Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, are the LCMS resident artists in the 2010–11 season.*



## Talk about Hoffnung

Gerard Hoffnung is a name that conjures up cartoons, drawings, music and humour. However, in Annetta Hoffnung’s wonderfully illustrated talk presented by LCMS in January 2010, we also became aware of his serious side. He was an anti-nuclear activist; a prison visitor who supported the Howard League for Penal Reform; and a man who worked against apartheid.

As both musician and artist, with a charismatic and forceful personality, he galvanised huge resources to produce his famous 1956 concert at the Festival Hall—which all apparently stemmed from a fine lunch at Wheeler’s! He captivated all who met him. Tickets for the concert sold out in two hours, and Hoffnung conducted an unforgettable performance of Malcolm Arnold’s ‘Grand Overture for Vacuum Cleaners.’

Having spent his childhood in Germany, he moved with his family as refugees to the UK, where life at an English public school emphasised his feeling of solitariness—his eccentricities were not always appreciated. Later, in spite of having been expelled from Hornsey Art School, he did well at Harrow School of Art. Annetta showed us the wide variety of his artistic accomplishment. His love of myths and legends comes through in his illustrations of fairies and fantasy stories, and his sense of fun produced hilarious line drawings such as ‘Ping,’ ‘Hum’ and ‘Pizzicato.’ His fascination with animals inspired the cat studies and musical animals, not to mention his insect orchestra. Through his passion for tuba playing he had a unique view of the orchestra and orchestral players, and brought his keen observational insight to his art work.

Not only did he design the massive hanging decorations for the Chelsea Arts Ball at the Albert Hall, but he also made wonderful illustrations for Glyndebourne Festival programmes. He was a popular broadcaster on the BBC, remembered for his appearances on Saturday Night on the Light and Monitor.

His many friends and colleagues included John Amis, Charles Mackerras, Dennis Brain, Gerald Priestland, Humphrey Searle, Joseph Horowitz and Gordon Jacob. He was able to hold his own with them all. In spite of his short life (he died in 1959 at the age of 34), he left a unique legacy for us to enjoy today. He was considered in one of his school reports as “Not serious enough but more serious than he was...”!

Many thanks to Annetta Hoffnung for such an entertaining afternoon.

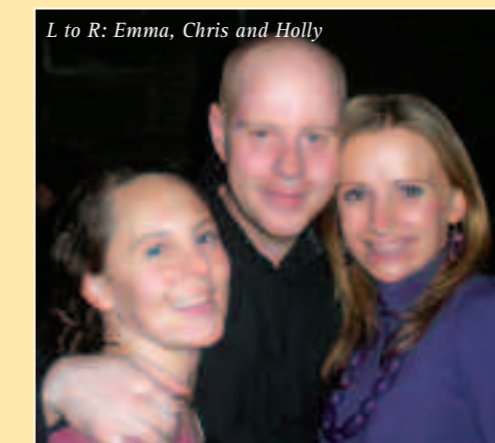
Further information about Gerard Hoffnung is available at [www.welcome.to/GerardHoffnung](http://www.welcome.to/GerardHoffnung)

Chris Bradshaw & Maryan Balkwill

# Getting to Know You

Continuing our series of pen-portraits of members of the LCMS and Kings Place community, we introduce some of the Kings Place staff who are essential to our concerts, as well as the editor of ‘Chamber Music Notes,’ who is also a LCMS trustee.

## Chris Nye, Holly Thomas & Emma Rule Box Office Team



Chris, Holly and Emma make up some of the Kings Place Box Office Team. Chris is the manager and Emma and Holly are the supervisors, although among themselves they are known as Batman and Batgirls. One of these three will always be on the box-office front desk of a Sunday evening, ready with deadly ninja moves to combat the evils of the Befuddler, who attempts to make ticketing appear far more complex and confusing than it really is. Chris, Holly and Emma have many years’ box-office experience between them. Chris has come to Kings Place from the Royal Albert Hall, where he was an assistant box-office manager; Holly, from the Burney Grant Arts Centre, where she was an assistant box-office manager; and Emma, from the Barbican Centre, where she also was an assistant box-office manager. All three very much enjoy working with the London Chamber Music Society of a Sunday, as with such a regular fixture, there is a great opportunity to really get to know the organisers and regular concert goers. Chris, Holly and Emma have learnt that Sunday night chamber music concerts are not only a celebration of beautiful classical music but also a real opportunity for a good old-fashioned social get-together.

## Dinis Sousa Stage Manager



Dinis has been working as a stage manager at Kings Place for over a year now, since October 2008. He works in all different types of events at Kings Place, including the LCMS series. He is the main point of contact for the artists on the day, making sure they are happy and that everything runs on time. Since September 2009 Dinis has been studying Piano with Philip Jenkins at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has already played with different musicians and formed a piano trio, which played for the first time in February.

## Nina Welch Technical Administrator



Nina Welch became familiar with LCMS through Kings Place Music Foundation, where she works as Technical Administrator. She has also stage-managed many of the Sunday concerts, and can occasionally be seen bringing chairs and music stands on stage between pieces. Although she is more at home with popular music, the latest diagnosis has indicated that she may have caught the classical bug.

## Jane Sufian Editor/Trustee



Jane is editor of ‘Chamber Music Notes,’ as well as a new trustee of LCMS. She is grateful to the editorial team of Chris Bradshaw, Leon Levy and Walter Rudeloff, whose knowledge of music and musicians make the newsletter possible. Jane came from New York to live in London nearly 20 years ago, and soon started attending the Sunday evening concerts at Conway Hall. For a couple of years she was on the LCMS membership committee there, and she continues to enjoy both the musical and the social aspects of LCMS membership. She hopes that other LCMS members will introduce themselves to her at one of the concerts, and let the editorial team know what they would like to see in future issues of the Newsletter.

# Life in the Fast Lane

Well, the bus lane, actually. Kings Cross parking is limited, so try one of these. It might be more enjoyable than you think!

- No. 10 Hammersmith – Knightsbridge – Kings X
- No. 17 London Bridge – Holborn – Kings X – Archway
- No. 45 Clapham Park – Elephant – Kings X
- No. 46 Paddington – Hampstead – Kings X
- No. 59 Streatham – Waterloo – Holborn – Kings X
- No. 63 Honor Oak – Blackfriars – Kings X
- No. 73 Victoria – Kings X – Islington – Seven Sisters
- No. 91 Trafalgar Square – Kings X – Crouch End
- No. 139 West Hampstead – Oxford Circus – Kings X
- No. 214 Liverpool Street – Islington – Kings X – Highgate
- No. 259 Edmonton Green – Finsbury Park – Kings X
- No. 390 Notting Hill Gate – Kings X – Archway

Check before you go!

